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THE CUCKOO AND NIGHTINGALE IN MUSIC

By ORLANDO A. MANSFIELD

TO musician, philosopher and poet alike, the subject of Bird Music has always been one of more than ordinary attraction. The musician has been interested in its artistic expression; the philosopher in its scientific investigation; the poet in its emotional appeal. Thus, more than fifty years "before the Common Account called Anno Domini," we have the Latin poet and philosopher, Lucretius, attributing the origin of music to human imitation of the harmony of the feathered tribe. By his English translator, Creech (1714), he is represented as asserting concerning primitive humanity that

> Through all the woods they heard the charming noise
> Of chirping birds, and tried to frame their voice
> And imitate. Thus birds instructed man,
> And taught them songs before their art began.

Some eighteen centuries later the same idea was echoed by that great musical historian, Sir John Hawkins, who, in the first volume of his History of Music, opines that

> The voices of animals, the whistling of the winds, the fall of water, the concussion of bodies of various kinds, not to mention the melody of birds, as they all contain in them the rudiments of harmony, may easily be supposed to have furnished the minds of intelligent creatures with such ideas of sound, as time, and the accumulated observation of succeeding ages, could not fail to improve into a system.

For an English lawyer, accustomed by training and environment to "admit nothing," to "question everything," and to "call for proof," this is a fairly complete committment, if one may be allowed to use the word in a literary rather than in a legal sense. But whether the theories of poet and philosopher and of musical amateur are consonant with fact, is not so much a matter for concern in the present connection. To us the significant thing is that thoughtful men, living in widely remote periods, and engaged in totally different pursuits, should share similar views with reference to the importance of the music of "the fowls of the air."

From birds in general two or three particular classes of songsters have been especially selected for notice by practical musicians as well as by writers on musical topics. These classes comprise the birds known as the cuckoo, the nightingale, and the lark. Of the latter it is not convenient to speak in this essay; but it is only fair to say that while the first class has obtained notoriety on account of the characteristic interval of its vocal figure, the two latter classes have achieved undying fame through the variety and beauty of their songs. Concerning the cuckoo as a bird, all that can be said here is that the singing cuckoo is a habitant of the Eastern hemisphere, visiting Europe,—in early spring,—from the wooded parts of Northern Africa, and departing before the end of summer. Thus the old English saying:

> In May he sings both night and day,
> In June he altereth his tune,
> In July he'll fly away.

The cukcoo's objectionable habit of depositing its eggs in the nest of another bird,—generally that of the hedge-sparrow,—and the still more objectionable habit of the young cuckoo of throwing out of the nest every occupant except himself, are facts known to every tyro in natural history. The cuckoo of the Eastern world is mostly of a bluish ash colour, and only the males sing. The American yellow-billed cuckoo, although possessing the redeeming feature of rearing its own young, is songless and, therefore, has no musical interest.

This latter, of course, centres entirely in the cuckoo's song—if such it may be called. This "song" has several remarkable characteristics, one of which is interesting on scientific grounds, the other for aesthetic or purely musical reasons. The former peculiarity has never received the attention it deserves. Probably the first to direct attention to it was that poet of nature, William Wordsworth, who, in his poem "To the Cuckoo," says:

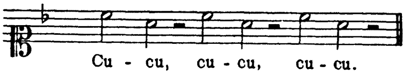
> When I am lying on the grass
>   Thy two-fold shout I hear,
> That seems to fill the whole air's space
>   As loud far off as near.

For a man who has never been credited with any definite musical knowledge, these lines exhibit considerable acumen, since the poet has not only drawn attention to the well-known fact that the cuckoo's song consists of two tones, but has earned our gratitude by reminding us that this "two-fold shout" seems "as loud far off as near." Indeed the cuckoo's song is distinctly audible at distances much greater than a mile and, under favourable circumstances, has been often so heard by the present writer. We can understand the extensive audibility of the song of the nightingale or the lark, on account of their remarkable timbre; but the tones of the cuckoo have no particularly musical quality to assist them in this respect. The whole subject would be, in our opinion, an interesting one for further acoustical investigation and for much fuller discussion.

Of the more musical characteristics of the cuckoo's tones, Wordsworth, as we have already noticed, in his expression "two-fold shout," has left us to infer that the cuckoo's call consists of only two tones. These tones are generally of uniform length, or with the first tone slightly shorter than the second, while both are somewhat *staccato*, each "call" being followed by a slight period of silence. But the most interesting point is the interval separating the two tones. This, in contradiction to popular ideas which here, as well as almost everywhere else, are nearly always incorrect, is usually a perfect 4th at the first appearance of the bird in England and adjacent countries. The writer has never heard this interval exceeded except on one occasion. This was on May 30, 1912, when walking on Stanner Ridge, near Kington, Herefordshire, England, on the borderland between England and Central Wales. Here he noted a cuckoo distinctly and repeatedly singing an augmented 4th. But as the season advances the compass of the interval decreases, first to a major 3rd, and then to that interval by which the cuckoo's call is conventionally represented,—a minor 3rd. Eventually the cuckoo's voice breaks, the "two-fold shout" disappears, and gives place to a mere unmusical croak of approximately a semitone.

The absolute pitch of the lower of the two tones forming the cuckoo's call is near to, or about, middle C or D.[1] Sir John Hawkins writes it thus, using the Soprano Clef:

Ex.1



Here the conventional interval of a minor 3rd, the period of silence after each call, and the old English orthography, are all points of interest.

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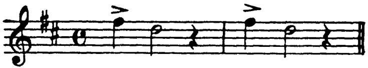
[1] In a recent publication of some extracts from her father's note-books, a daughter of the late Sir Hubert Parry devotes a page to his records of cuckoo calls, as heard at his Gloucestershire residence one summer during the latter part of May and the earlier days of June. These calls, nearly 40 in number, have either middle C, D, D flat, or E flat for their final sounds, and range in compass from a major 2nd to a major 3rd, the first note of each call being almost invariably shorter than the second. Sir Hubert has also added some interesting remarks on the intonation and the manner of execution of the various calls. In one place he speaks of "two cuckoos singing the same call with very different timbre, one like a stopped diapason, and the other like a gamba.

About half a century after the appearance of Hawkins' history, —in 1832, to be exact,—William Gardiner, a stocking manufacturer of Leicester, England, a noted musical amateur, litterateur, composer, and compiler, and a personal acquaintance and correspondent of Haydn and Beethoven, produced his "Music of Nature; or an attempt to prove that what is passionate and pleasing in the art of singing, speaking, and performing upon musical instruments, is derived from the sounds of the Animated World." In this quaint, interesting, and anything but worthless work, Gardiner says, concerning the cuckoo, that children mark his well-known song, crying

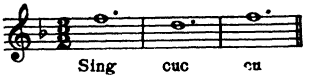
Ex.2



Here we have, as our selected pitch, the G clef instead of the Soprano, the interval of a major rather than that of a minor 3rd, and a more modern notation. Also the silence after each call is graphically represented, as well as the lengthening of the second tone and the accentuation of the first, both these latter points being occasional features of the cuckoo's song. This song, says Gardiner, "I have invariably found in Leicestershire to be in the key of D. If the cuckoos in other countries should be found to accord with this curious fact, as nature is pretty much the same, we may take these notes as a standard of pitch." With our absolutely accurate and scientifically constructed instruments for the denoting of absolute pitch, the idea of being dependent for the latter upon such a variable thing as the tone of a cuckoo is now as preposterous as it is absurd. Gardiner then goes on to quote the celebrated naturalist, Gilbert White (1720–1793), of Selborne, Hampshire, as saying that he had tested all the owls in his neighbourhood with a pitch pipe, and found them to hoot in B flat, and the cuckoos to sing in the key of D![1]

Whatever one may think concerning Sir John Hawkins' opinion that the reproduction of these tones constitutes "the most ancient species of musical notation," and that the tones themselves "appear to be a natural and very obvious subject for it," it is a mere matter of fact that these "reproductions," in number at least, have been legion. Perhaps the earliest example of them is to be found in the old English Rota, or Round, attributed to John of Fornsete, a monk of Reading, about 1226. Here we have the phrase:

Ex.3



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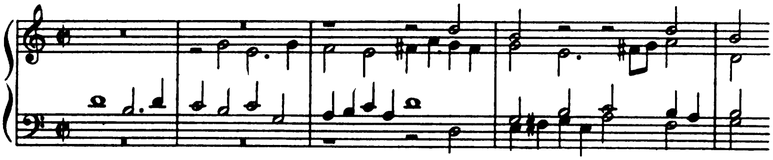
[1] The standard pitch at the end of the 18th Century was nearly a tone lower than at present. This would lower the pitch of White and Gardiner to (approximately) C.

woven in as an integral and essential part of the composition. Then in the Elizabethan age, John Bennet (who flourished between 1570 and 1615, but of whose life little is known save that he was one of the contributors to the *Triumphs of Oriana*), published in 1599, "Madrigals to four voyces being his first works." In one of these, "Thyrsis, sleepest thou?" he has a vocal imitation of the cuckoo's song; while Thomas Weelkes, another contributor to the *Triumphs of Oriana*, and sometime organist of Chichester Cathedral, a great writer of English church music and madrigals, published in 1600, two books of madrigals in which one composition, "The Nightingale the Organ of Delight," again introduces the cuckoo's song vocally.

Leaving England for Italy, and vocal for instrumental music, our next example is found to be the "Capriccio sopra il Cucho" of Girolamo Frescobaldi (1583–1644), the most distinguished organist of his age, sometime organist of St. Peter's, Rome. This work was one of a collection of Capricci published in Rome in 1624, and at Venice in 1626. The opening measures run thus:

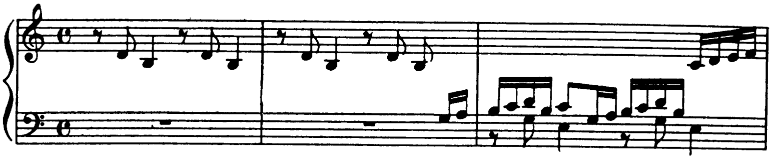
Ex. 4



Here we have the more popular interval of a minor 3rd used as the initial tones of a "point of imitation" and (as a reference to the whole composition would show) continuously in the melody, which latter consists of nothing but the two sounds, D and B, repeated after divers rests during which the imitative treatment continues in the other parts. This work has been transcribed for the pianoforte by Harold Bauer, and for the modern organ by John E. West.

About half a century later comes Johann Kasper Kerl, the noted organist of Munich and Vienna, probably a pupil of Frescobaldi, but certainly a student under Carissimi. On the 17th of July, 1679, he wrote a "Capricio Kuku," in G, which has been edited by the late Mr. J. S. Shedlock. Here the style is less vocal and better suited to keyboard execution than that of Frescobaldi. We quote the opening measures from which it will be seen that the minor 3rd is again employed, a proceeding which obtains throughout the movement:

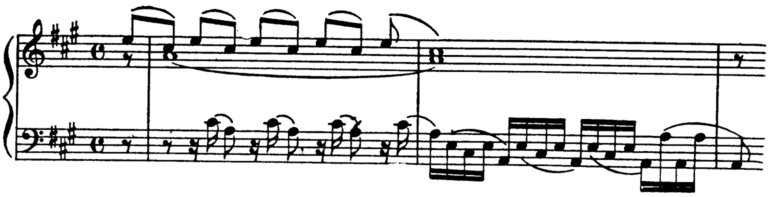
Ex. 5



It was upon a motet of Kerl's that Handel was supposed to have founded the chorus, "Egypt was glad when they departed," from his *Israel in Egypt;* and, as we shall see later, he appears to have known and to have been under considerable obligations to the Cuckoo Capriccio.

Returning again to Italy we find Bernardo Pasquini (1637–1710), the celebrated Roman organist and harpsichordist, writing in 1698 his "Toccata con lo Scherzo del Cuccó." Here the style and general expression shew a still further advance. The key chosen is A, but the cuckoo call occasionally expresses itself in a major 3rd, the rhythm being an alternation of two equal notes or a shorter followed by a longer. Both these points are illustrated in the closing measures:

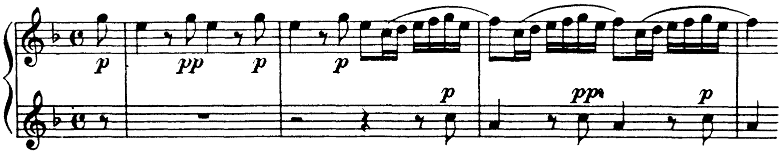
Ex. 6



Passing—geographically—to France, and—chronologically—to the 18th century, we meet with Louis Claude Daquin, the Parisian organist, who, in 1735, published his first book of harpsichord pieces, a volume in which was found his celebrated "Le Coucou," "so quaintly fresh that it will surely never grow old." And so popular did the cuckoo call become that not only was it made the germ or motive for isolated harpsichord movements, but upon it were actually founded so-called Cuckoo Concertos. Amongst these was one by Antonio Vivaldi, the Italian violinist, the work being contained in his series of concertos attempting to illustrate the four seasons. Then there was also the cuckoo concerto of the Saxon-born English resident, John Frederick Lampe (1703–51), the friend of Handel and also of Charles Wesley, the hymnodist. Lampe was a brother-in-law of Thomas Arne, and this reminds us that in 1770, the great English melodist, whose memory is perpetuated in the immortal strains of "Rule Britannia" and "Where the Bee sucks," produced in London, under the direction of Garrick, a representation of Dryden's King Arthur, with Purcell's original music supplemented by some additional numbers from Arne's pen. Amongst the latter was a new overture which is stated to have contained amongst other features, "an imitation on the flute of the call of the 'Cuckow.'" Both Arne and Lampe represented the cuckoo's call by the interval of a major 3rd. But nearly a century earlier Purcell himself had employed the same device, and at the same interval, in the concluding symphony of a song in the *Faerie Queen*, a series of pieces of incidental music written, in 1692, to illustrate an anonymous adaptation of Shakespeare's Midsummer Night's Dream.

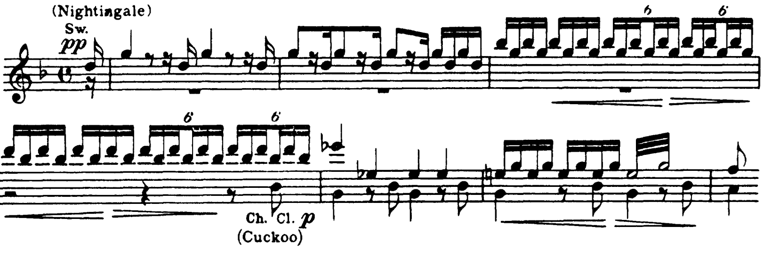
But that greater Saxon than Lampe,—the giant Saxon,—George Frederick Handel, with all his mastery over the somewhat restricted methods of musical expression characteristic of his age, only includes the cuckoo call in one of his compositions for his favourite instrument, the organ. This particular work was that known as the Cuckoo and Nightingale Concerto, a composition or compilation planned for the orchestra and the English organ of Handel's day,—an orchestra of string, oboes, and bassoons, and an organ of limited compass and destitute of a pedal board. The interest of the Concerto is centered in its first movement in which occurs the characteristic passage from which its name is derived. The great organ virtuoso, the late Mr. W. T. Best, of St. George's Hall, Liverpool, perhaps the greatest performer upon his instrument that the world has ever seen,—certainly the greatest of the 19th century,—has included a concerto under this name in a set of movements, selected from Handel, arranged for the organ in concerto form, and published as examples of the latter by Boosey & Co., of London. But Best's introduction differs from that preceding the detached concerto known as the Cuckoo and Nightingale Concerto, because taken from various other sources. The same applies to the two movements which follow the Allegro; and even the latter —which is the only movement possessing any interest for us in this connection—is taken in part from the 9th Grand Concerto for Strings. Further, Best's work although masterly in construction and effect, is, really, a very free transcription, the finely developed Cadenza being entirely the work of "W.T.B." In this Best version the cuckoo call introduces the second subject, *e.g.*,

Ex.7



and is used throughout the latter, sometimes in conjunction with the nightingale motive, *e.g.*,

Ex. 8

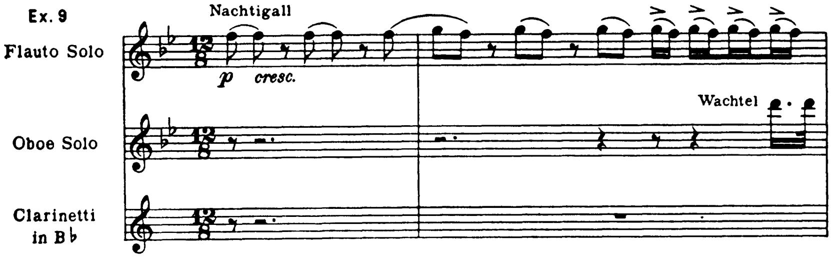


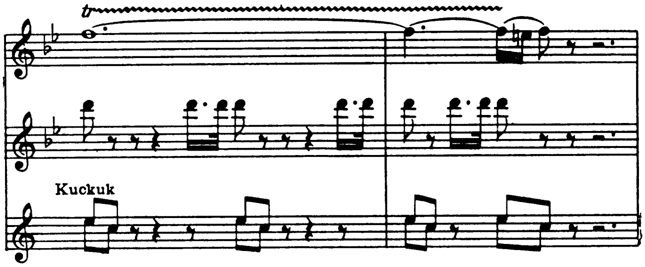
The manner in which this call is expressed is, however, more *à la* Best than Handelian in style. Nevertheless, a comparison of Exs. 4 and 7 would seem to show, as we have already remarked, that Handel in the cultivation of this Concerto must have been ploughing with the oxen of Johann Kasper Kerl.

Amongst the classical writers the cuckoo call was relegated for the most part to the realm of children's music. Thus Haydn employs the toy cuckoo in his celebrated Toy Symphony of 1788, writing for it—on the tones G and E—artistically and effectively. In these latter respects he differs from Andreas Romberg (1767–1821), the violinist, who with his cousin, Bernhard Romberg, the violoncellist, and with Anton Reicha, the theorist, played with Beethoven, at Bonn, in the band of the Elector of Cologne. Romberg writes at the same pitch as Haydn, but frequently employs rapid repetitions of the tones instead of the two call-sounds. As both Mendelssohn's Toy Symphonies, composed in 1827, are lost, we are only able to surmise that as the instruments were known to be identical with those used by Haydn, the effects produced, and the notation employed, were probably more or less similar to those of the older master.

As may reasonably be expected, Beethoven introduces the cuckoo call into his Pastoral Symphony. Here, in the Coda to

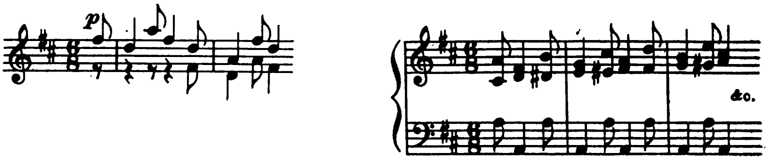
Ex. 9





the slow movement,—the scene by the brook,—we have the tones forming a major 3rd assigned to the clarinets in unison,—the part being marked "Kukuk,"—in company with the flute,—marked "Nachtigall,"—and the oboe,—marked "Wachtel" (quail). Some enthusiasts have tried to read a cuckoo call into the broken tonic chords which usher in the second subject of the Pastoral Sonata, Op. 28 and the upper part of the harmony over the dominant pedal preceding the Coda (Ex. 10). But this is too much like

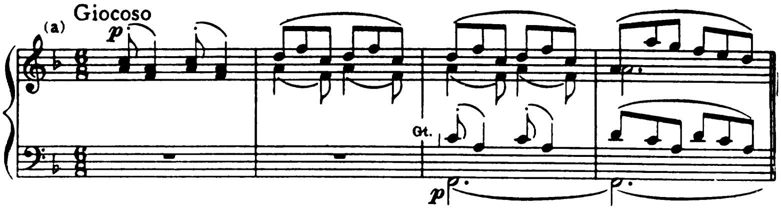
Ex.10

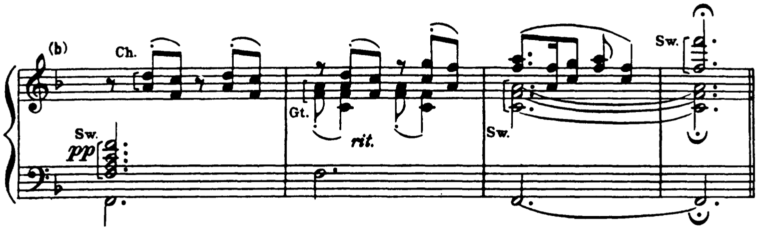


bringing the head of Charles the First into everything, especially as the name Pastoral was not given to the Sonata in D by Beethoven himself but, in all probability, by the publisher, Cranz, of Hamburg.

And although the romantic school has treated the cuckoo call with scant courtesy, the progression still survives in some modern music. Thus Reinecke has included it as a very essential part of his Toy Symphony in C; while a much more important treatment is to be found in Edwin H. Lemare's organ solo, "Cuckoo," No. 1 of his five Summer Sketches, Op. 73. Perhaps this work of a modern English organ virtuoso is the most artistic we have yet noticed. We give a few measures from the initial and concluding phrases by way of quotation:

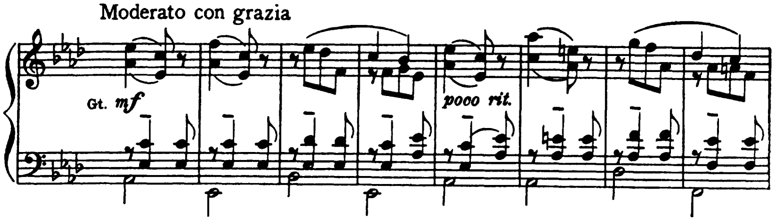
Ex.11





but the music will certainly repay very careful study not only in this connection but on account of its own merits. Also the employment of the minor 3rd should not pass unnoticed. There is, we think, an undoubted resemblance or reference to the cuckoo call in Farjeon's Spring Song Op. 23, No. 4 (Ex. 12). Our quotation is from the organ arrangement by Mr. Purcell J. Mansfield, of Paisley Abbey, Scotland, the son of the present writer; but as the first tone is longer than the second, and as the quality of the interval varies, we leave our readers to decide for themselves whether the passage is an intentional imitation or an "undesigned coincidence."

Ex. 12



There are doubtless many other examples of the cuckoo's call still to be found in music both ancient and modern,[1] but our space is exhausted and we can only notice here that a device for producing the tones of the cuckoo was often attached to mediaeval organs. Indeed, as late as 1750, an organ in the monastery at Weingarten, built by Gabler, and containing the mystical number of 6666 pipes, was said to have been furnished with one of these accessories. All we can say in favour of such a device is that it was at any rate more sensible than some of those extremely and childishly stupid effects operated by stop knobs in some earlier organs. These consisted of such things as a representation of Time indicating the rhythm by "beating time"; while in one case a certain stop, if drawn, would cause a contrivance something like a fox's tail to flap into the unfortunate performer's face. Such effects were on a par with the rest of the horseplay humour of the Dark Ages, which was generally weak when it was not actually wicked.

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[1] For instance Leopold Godowsky's piece "The Cuckoo" in his set of 30 pieces called "Triakontameron" (G. Schirmer, 1920).—*Ed.*

Any attempt to write about the nightingale in music degenerates into a mere task of selection rather than research, the material being so enormous and, as a rule, so easily accessible. The bird itself, as everybody is probably aware, is another habitant of the Eastern Hemisphere, arriving in England about the middle of April, and leaving in August or September for southern climes. It is found during the summer in France, Germany, and Poland, and is not unknown in Italy or even in Palestine. One remarkable fact concerning this songster is its preference for certain strictly defined localities. Thus, in the West of England, a noted district for singing birds, the nightingale is extremely partial to the native district of the writer of this paper,—the district included in the western portion of the county of Wiltshire and the eastern portion of the county of Somerset,—the country once occupied by Selwood Forest, and at one time the scene of King Alfred's most brilliant exploits. But in the adjoining and more south-westerly counties of Devon and Cornwall the bird is seldom seen or heard. Its name is supposed to be derived from the Anglo-Saxon night and *galan*, to sing. Its appearance is decidedly plain, and its habits so unobtrusive as to render observation somewhat difficult. Only the males sing. These arrive in England some seven or eight days before the females, singing before and after midnight in order to attract their companions and guide them on their way. The song ceases when the young are hatched. Bechstein states that the muscles of the larynx, in the case of the male bird, are proportionately more powerful than those of any other songster. The melody of the nightingale's song changes according to its emotions. More than a score of variations of its song have been recorded, the latter being so articulate as to render the task of a musical representation comparatively easy. Mr. Danes Barrington, a noted English investigator, has made "an attempt to appraise the songs of English birds and let the world know how they stand from the standpoint of technic, quality, &c." On a basis of 100, Mr. Barrington finds the nightingale an easy first, his analysis being—assigning 20 points to each heading—thus: mellowness of tone, 19; sprightly tones, 14; plaintive tones, 19; compass, 19; and execution, 19; total, 90%. The only birds in the running with the nightingale are, according to our authority, the skylark, with 63%; the linnet with 76%; the woodlark with 59%; and the English robin with 58%.

Like the making of books, references to the song of the nightingale, both in poetry and in prose, are practically without end in their making. But we are only interested here in those utterances which testify to the musical character of the nightingale's song, and of these reference can only be made to a very few characteristic specimens. For instance, the mournful character of nightingale music is much emphasized by the older writers. Thus Sir Philip Sydney, in "O Philomela fair," says,

> The nightingale . . .
> Sings out her woes . . .
> And mournfully bewailing,
>   Her throat in tunes expresseth
>   What grief her breast oppresseth.

Milton, in his *Il Penseroso*, speaks of the bird as "most musical, most melancholy!" a statement which, two centuries later, Coleridge indignantly repudiated, declaring in his poem, "The Nightingale," that

> *In nature there is nothing melancholy.*

Thomson in his *Seasons* insists on the sadder element of the song; and, alluding to the bird, as do all the poets, in the feminine gender, instead of the masculine, asserts that

> . . . she sings
> Her sorrows through the night! . . .
> . . . till, wide around, the woods
> Sigh to her song, and with her wail resound.

Milton, however, in his sonnet, "To the Nightingale," takes a more optimisitc view of the effect of this song, and apostrophizes the bird thus:

> O nightingale, that on yon blooming spray
> Warblest at eve, when all the woods are still;
> Thou with fresh hope the lover's breast doth fill.

Last of all we have Matthew Arnold, the apostle of "light and sweetness," crediting the song with at least one new element, in the lines:

> Hark! from that moonlit cedar what a burst!
> What triumph! hark!—what pain!

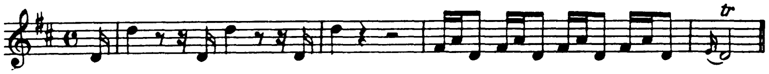
From this we can see that while the poets agree as to the beauty of the nightingale's song, they differ considerably as to its character. In felicitous prose the charm of nightingale music is quaintly but beautifully emphasized by old Isaac Walton, who writes:

> He that at midnight . . . shall hear, as I have heard, the sweet descant, the natural rising and falling, the doubling and redoubling of her voice, might well be lifted above the earth, and say, Lord! what

music hast Thou provided for Thy saints in Heaven, when Thou affordest bad men such music on earth?

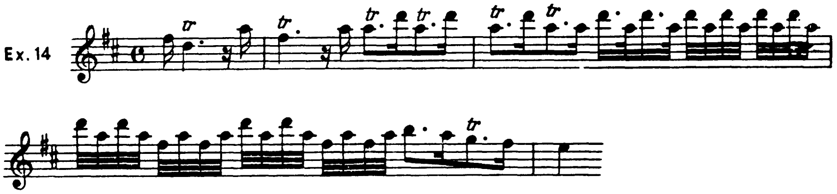
The numerous variations in the nightingale's song—to which reference has already been made—produce as many differences in its notation as poets and philosophers have discovered in its character. These notational differences are often due to the fact that the bird has different songs in different localities, so that one auditor would hear one strain in one place and, from another bird, another strain elsewhere. Thomas Gardiner, in his "Music of Nature," already referred to, says: "These varieties may be compared to the dialects of different provinces." Gardiner then goes on to attempt to account for the "soft and plaintive note" of the bird, and its "beautiful and solemn melody," by the fact that it "sings in a lower voice than other birds." This statement, speaking comparatively, is fairly correct, the song of many birds being so high as to render absolutely exact musical translation a somewhat difficult task. Gardiner writes the nightingale's song thus:

Ex. 13



and declares that Handel has closely imitated it in his *L'Allegro*, *e.g.*:

Ex. 14

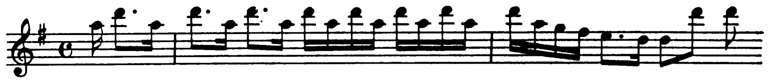


But Gardiner's notation, although doubtless proportionately accurate, is not absolutely correct, being much lower than the notation which would be needed to represent the song as often heard by the writer during the summer months near his birthplace in the heart of what was once Selwood Forest. The pitch and melody in this case were almost in exact accordance with the notation assigned to the bird by Beethoven in his Pastoral Symphony, as quoted in Ex. 9, viz.: a prepared shake on the upper tones, generally treble G or upper C. Often we have heard these birds attain to and constantly repeat a perfect *messa di voce* (< >) on upper G of the treble staff, and pipe repetitions on C and D above that as shewn in Exs. 14, 15, and 18.

But more than a century and a half before the appearance of Gardiner's "Music of Nature," there flourished one Athanasius

Kircher, a Jesuit who, fleeing to France when Gustavus Adolphus entered Germany in 1635, became a professor at the Jesuit's College at Avignon, and afterwards professor of mathematics and Hebrew in Rome where he died in 1680. Thirty years before his death he issued his chief work "Musurgia Universalis," in the first book of which, according to Sir John Hawkins, "he is very curious in his disquisitions touching the voice and the song of the nightingale which he has endeavoured to render in notes borrowed from the musical scale." Concerning these notes, Hawkins opines that they were more correct rhythmically than tonally, thus confirming our previous statement concerning the numerous varieties of the nightingale's song, and the consequent impossibility of securing notational representation thereof which should be identical as regards melodic outline.

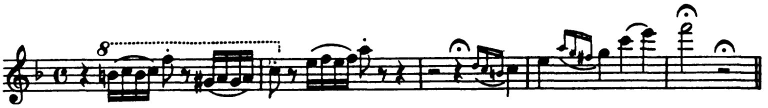
As early as the Elizabethan age the song of the nightingale had commenced to secure the attention of composers, as we have already observed in the case of Thomas Weelkes. But the song of the nightingale being more varied than that of the cuckoo, the former did not lend itself so easily to musical reproduction, especially to such reproduction or representation as would be immediately recognized by an auditor. Indeed, it was not until Handel, in his *L'Allegro*, in 1740, introduced one example or specimen of the nightingale's song, that we have a definite musical passage for quotation. As noted by the great master, the song runs as above. Here the employment of the broken perfect 4th should be carefully noted, as this is Handel's favourite figure for representing the song of the nightingale. He makes extensive use of this motive here and elsewhere, and here so much so that the whole song, "Sweet bird, that shun'st the noise of folly," from which our quotation is taken, will repay careful study in this respect. Eight years later, in 1748, Handel introduced the same feature in his oratorio, *Solomon*, in the celebrated chorus, "May no rash intruder," a chorus, from this circumstance, called the Nightingale Chorus. This time, in addition to the broken 4ths, considerable use is made of the reiterated upper D, these repeated tones, as we have already observed, being a characteristic feature in the song of the nightingale. We quote just a few measures of symphony:

Ex. 15


Of course no nightingale ever sings, or ever did sing, precisely as represented in this typical Handelian strain; but the point we wish to emphasize is that this phrase embodies two of the essential features of the song now under discussion. Hence the reason for its quotation. Further examples shew that Handel must have been a closer student of the music of nature than has ever been admitted or imagined. And this conclusion is confirmed upon reference to the quotation from the Cuckoo and Nightingale Concerto contained in Ex. 8. Here the broken 3rds and 4ths and the reiterated tones are especially prominent.

Again returning to the classics we note that in the soprano solo, "On mighty pens," from his oratorio, *The Creation*, Haydn, at the words, "From every bush and grove resound the nightingale's delightful notes," suggests the song of the bird by means of a series of springing figures and inverted turns assigned to the solo flute, *e.g.*

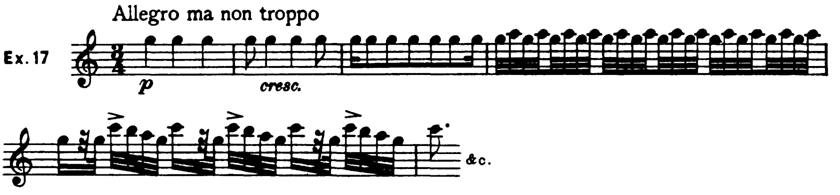
Ex. 16



Here the effect intended and essayed is not one of actual imitation, but of purely musical suggestion. There are other and perhaps better methods of conveying a musical impression or sensation besides the employment of mere literalism. Here, as elsewhere, whether the letter "killeth" or otherwise, it is the spirit that "giveth life."

Concerning Beethoven's treatment of the nightingale's song in the Pastoral Symphony, as quoted in Ex. 9, it may interest our readers to know that this notation corresponds almost exactly with the song as heard by the writer almost every early summer night for many years in the old English home of his boyhood. Especially should be noticed the prepared shake which is exquisitely performed by some of the birds on brilliant moonlight nights. Another fairly exact representation of the song is to be found in a Beethoven fragment, "Der Gesang der Nachtigall," composed in 1813, and numbered 277 in Series 25 of the Breitkopf and Haertel edition of Beethoven's works. Here, a short symphony,—Allegro ma non troppo,—reads as follows:

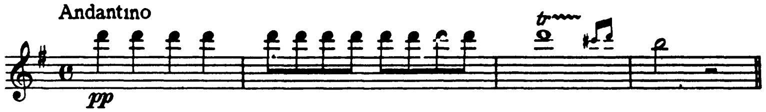
Ex. 17



In the few vocal measures which follow there is nothing to suggest bird music in general or the song of the nightingale in particular. In the Toy Symphonies of Haydn and Romberg the parts assigned to the toy called "nightingale" consist of shakes and repeated tones on treble G, and as such call for no comment here.

But in Lefébure Wély's well-known and somewhat well-worn Fantasia Pastorale in G, for the organ, the nightingale effect is happily produced by temporarily discarding melody for mere rhythm and writing a series of repeated tones, increasing in rapidity as they progress, and ending with a prolonged shake, *e.g.*:

Ex.18



This notation is again in exact agreement with the song as heard by the writer of this paper in bygone years. Wély's contemporary and compatriot, Edouard Batiste (1820–76), sometime organist of St. Eustache, Paris, although indulging, in his Storm Fantasia in C minor, in a good many thunder effects of "the baser sort," and a good deal of florid melody of the more tawdry type, gives us nothing which can be construed into a representation of the song we have been discussing. Indeed, in general terms, it may be said that modern composers are not partial to exact imitations of natural sounds. As aforesaid, they prefer to suggest rather than to depict, to idealize rather than to portray, at times, perhaps, forgetting that the two operations may be combined in one action, they being by no means antagonistic. But the nightingale's song is neither neurotic nor decadent, but purely diatonic; and as such it is self-excluded from the chromatic environment of so much of our modern music.

And although further passages for quotation could doubtless be culled from the pages of music past or present, ancient or modern, enough has been "set down" here to convey a fair idea of the importance assigned by musicians to the songs of at least two representatives of the feathered tribe, to show the readiness of composers to utilize the "singing of birds" for purposes of local colour, and to their desire in nearly all cases to represent these songs accurately or, at least, suggestively. At the same time the claim of worthy William Gardiner, that everything "passionate and pleasing" in music is "derived from the sounds of the Animated World" can scarcely be said to be proven. The debt of music to nature is considerable but by no means incalculable, for music consists of something far more exalted than the mere imitation of natural noises. Thus, while it is true, as old Thomas Fuller puts it, that "Music is nothing else but wild sounds civilized into time and tune," it is equally true, as Sir John Hawkins quaintly remarks, that

> There are few things in nature which music is capable of imitating, . . . and these powers of imitation constitute but a very small part of the excellence of music. . . . We may venture to pronounce that as its principles are founded in geometric truth, and seen to result from some general and universal law of nature, so its excellence is intrinsic, absolute, and inherent, and, in short, resolvable only into His will, Who has ordered all things in number, weight, and measure.